



*The Fearless Four pose on South Main Street at Hall Avenue as they prepare to leave. Left to right: J. Parker Cross, Jr., Charles T. Hosier, G. Richardson (Dick) Joyner, and Richard Sykes*

## THE AMAZING ADVENTURE OF THE FEARLESS FOUR

**I**n the spring of 1948, four sixteen-year old boys at Suffolk High School cooked up a plan for a summer adventure. Florida was very popular with Suffolk people in those days—they wanted to go! And they'd take the means of travel they were most accustomed to in their daily lives: bicycles.

The boys were Charles Hosier, son of Mr. and Mrs. Duke Hosier; Dick Joyner, son of Dr. and Mrs. Richardson Joyner; Richard Sykes, son of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Sykes; and Parker Cross, son of Dr. and Mrs. J. P. Cross. The first three were able to secure parental permission fairly easily but with the condition that Parker Cross, only child of very concerned parents, could go. His parents graciously agreed to let him participate in the adventure.

They bought English bikes, Coventry Eagles, at a cost of \$65 each from A. M. Mountcastle in Suffolk. They collected camping gear with the plan to sleep in tents along Route 17 South.

*Continued on Page 2*

The four departed with some fanfare on June 7, 1948, headed for the land of palm trees and citrus groves. Preston Charles of the Suffolk News Herald photographed the boys as they prepared to depart and it was he who dubbed them the Fearless Four.

About once a week during the trip they would call Dick Joyner's sister Frances to give a progress report. She would call the parents and Preston Charles, who reported to the readers of the Herald.

The first day they only covered about 50 miles, with 4 flat tires, and spent the night south of Edenton on Edenhuse Beach. Traffic on Route 17 was insignificant in those days. On the morning after the first night, they encountered Harold Quayle, father of some of their school chums, on the road. They gave him their camping gear to take home as it slowed them down too much. From that point forward they spent the night in motels, hotels or YMCA's. They didn't pay more than \$1 per night per person.

Averaging 105 miles per day, the adventurers reached Miami in ten days. Along the way they ate three meals a day for less than \$1 each per meal. Once they were in Florida, they encountered roadside citrus stands that promised all the juice one could drink for 10 or 15 cents. They took full advantage of those.

Miami in those days was very quiet in the hot summer months. The boys were able to get a hotel room for about \$1 per night per person and for about a week they explored and enjoyed the beach.

On June 21 they began the trip home, riding across Florida to its west coast, then north. In Georgetown, South Carolina, Richard Sykes's bike developed problems that the boys weren't equipped to handle. Rather than separating, the Fearless Four took the bus home and shipped the bikes. The cost for a lifetime of memories—about \$100 each.



*Repairing a flat tire—one of many*



*A typical motel along Rt. 17*



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*One of the stops along the way*

*Photos and information thanks to Dr. Parker Cross.*

## Orlando, Suffolk?

Charles Hosier's family, particularly his grandfather, J. Walter Hosier, had been fascinated by Florida for years. When the elder Hosier developed a neighborhood off Factory Street in the early 1900's, he named the neighborhood Orlando. Some streets were named for family members and one was named Hunter for Hosier himself because he was such an avid sportsman. But many streets had names taken straight from Florida: Collier, Eola, Kissimmee, Locust, Lucerne, Ocklawaha, Osceola and Wekiva.

J. Walter Hosier was born in 1862. He was the son of Confederate veteran Richard Hosier of the family for whom Hosier Road was named. Walter lived on the corner of West Washington and Wellons Streets (the current site of Nansemond Insurance) in a house filled with hunting trophies. The business that he operated, J. Walter Hosier Insurance, still carries his name though his family is no longer affiliated with it. Hosier retired to Florida and died there in 1955 at the age of 93. An interesting character, he never drove a car in his long life but he brought a bit of Florida to Suffolk.

IF YOU WANT TO BUY REAL ESTATE

**SEE ME**

IF YOU WANT TO SELL REAL ESTATE

**SEE ME**

IF YOU WANT INSURANCE

**SEE ME**

**J. Walter Hosier**

*From School Fair booklet of Nansemond County and City of Suffolk, 1911*

## A Hundred Years Old or More!

Suffolk has a surprising number of women's literary/social organizations that have reached or passed the 100-year mark and are still active. Here are the ones we know about and the year they were founded:

- The Suffolk Literary Club 1897
- The Driver Book Club 1903
- The Suffolk Book Club 1899
- The Magazine Club 1906
- The Sans Souci Literary Club 1903
- The Social Club 1907—celebrating its centennial this year

To capture the flavor of the times when these clubs were formed, read *And Ladies of the Club* by Helen Hoover Santmyer.



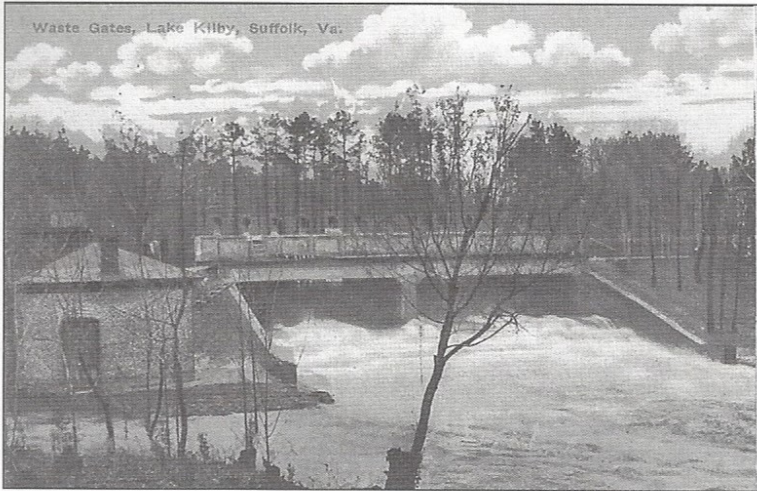
# Disastrous Storm Swept Over Suffolk In August, 1879

(From the Suffolk Herald, August 20, 1879, reprinted August 25, 1922)

Sunday was a cloudy day, with occasional rains, but up to 12 o'clock on Sunday night there was no token of the terrible morrow which followed. About 3 o'clock Monday morning the rain began to pour down in torrents, and from that time until after 11 o'clock A.M., a constant storm prevailed. The wind blew with terrible force, and the rain beat into every corner, crack and crevice that could be found, completely deluging many private residences, while hardly one could be found that did not leak in some place. The beautiful shade trees on the streets suffered greatly. Many were uprooted entirely, while broken limbs and battered leaves covered the sidewalks and streets.

At the Washington Hotel the old stables blew down, demolishing a new Jersey wagon and killing a fine hog belonging to the proprietors. The fine omnibus horse had just been removed at the suggestion of Mr. George W. Nurney to his stables, or he would have met the same fate. The amount of rainfall was almost unprecedented for the space of time, and soon after breakfast Mr. Wallace Kilby was informed that his mill (1) was in imminent peril from the water, which was washing over the dam and running around the mill with

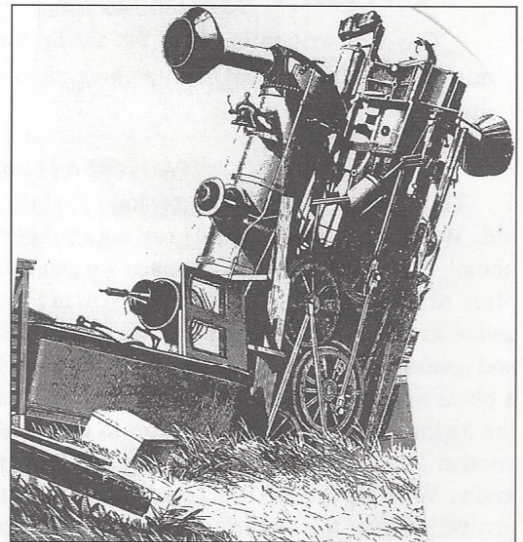
great force. Mr. Kilby quickly repaired to the scene of action, on account of the great force of water against them. He decided at once to cut the dam and save the mill, but the cutting was rendered almost unnecessary by the flood, which swept with resistless fury over the embankment. Once started, the dam, which was made entirely of earth, rapidly gave away while the seething waters rushed furiously through the breach. Below the dam the water backed up from the river until it was all of thirty feet deep. The flood gates were also swept away at the other end of the dam, and for hours the water rushed on without perceptibly lessening the quantity within. A large crowd of visitors went out to look upon the scene, which was terrible.



*Lake Kilby waste gate, built in preparation for water treatment plant. This picture was taken several years post-storm. 1. From Suffolk in Vintage Postcards*

The Seaboard and Roanoke (2) express train passed Suffolk going south a little later than the usual hour. Conductor Wills was in charge, and W. W. Weymouth was on the engine. When near the farm of Capt. E. L. Ballard, four miles from Suffolk (3), the train was stopped in

order that a fallen tree might be cleared from the track, after which it proceeded cautiously, going at the rate of about ten miles an hour, for a short distance, when in crossing a culvert the track gave away under the driving wheels of the engine, the support beneath having been washed away. With that quickness of perception and coolness of purpose which characterized the man, Bill Weymouth reversed his engine, threw open the throttle-valve, reached for the airbrake, and was a dead man before the passengers knew that they were even in danger. As his engine sank cab foremost down the chasm the tender locked with it, forcing him against the boiler, and there he died instantly. A colored fireman, Joe Scott, and a brakeman also colored, Moses Murphy by name, were also on the engine. Scott was caught against a large stone, and the larger bone of his leg crushed below the knee. Murphy had his foot badly crushed. The express and mail car was broken badly, and the express messenger, Mr. Vernon, was slightly injured by being thrown against a barrel. All mail and express matter was carefully preserved by the respective agents, and nothing was lost. As the telegraph lines were down, no assistance could be gotten from Portsmouth until a hand-car could be sent to carry the sad intelligence. Late in the afternoon a wrecking train came up, bringing Mr. E. G. Ghio, the efficient superintendent of the road, Joe Sam Brown, Mr. Pendleton, Mr. Hand and others, with a force of working-men. The dead body of poor Weymouth was placed in a coach, the wounded men were made as comfortable as circumstances would admit, and the passengers from the evening train from Weldon were transferred to the Portsmouth train, while those who were on the wrecked train crossed over and took care for Weldon. A force of workmen spent the night in repairing the wreck, and on Thursday morning travel was resumed.



*Similar accident from Train Wrecks by Robert C. Reed*

As soon as the news was received in Suffolk of the disaster to the train, Dr. P. B. Baker, with his horses and driver, George, started for the wreck. Hearing that he could not cross the creek at Kilby's mill (4), he tried to cross Nansemond river at the foot of Main street, but on account of deep water and rafts on the other side, could not do so. He then drove to Pitch Kettle (5) landing, where he found that the bridge had been washed away. He then went down the Somerton road by a circuitous route to get around the head waters of Kilby's mill-pond, but in trying to find a submerged bridge, near Mr. George Turlington's (6), his horses suddenly stepped into a narrow torrent of water six feet deep, which threw the Doctor across the spatter-board, with George on top of him. Both jumped out, and after wading through water up to the ears, gained the other side, and resumed their journey. They soon came to a place known as Spike's (7) Run, a

vast swamp having the appearance of a river. George put the horses in boldly, and might have possibly crossed over by bearing to his left hand, where it was somewhat shallow, but one of the horses became unmanageable and wheeled suddenly to the right, carrying the driver and buggy into swimming water. Here Doctor Phil exercised himself in swimming until he reached a place of safety, while George looked after the horses, both of which came near being drowned. He succeeded in turning the buggy around, and took up the Doctor, who was as wet as a drowned rat, and nearly as bad off. Not knowing any other available way which they could reach the train, George drove sadly back to town, with the consciousness that he had at least tried to take the Doctor to see the wounded.

Through the country adjacent to Suffolk great damage was done. The corn was completely prostrated, fruit was shaken from the trees, and valuable buildings blown down. Col. Hugh Morrison, who lives on the White Marsh road, had his splendid barn blown down and a seventy-five dollar cow killed by the falling timbers. The Town Bridge was badly damaged and will soon have to be replaced. Mr. D. C. Harrell lost about 70,000 bricks by the blowing over of his shed during the gale. Other disasters have not yet been reported, but doubtless they are many and serious. Fences have been swept away on every hand, and the fodder crop in many cases is totally ruined. Taken altogether it is the worst storm ever known hereabouts by the oldest inhabitant, and it is the general wish of every one that we may never look upon its like again.

*Thank goodness August 2007 has been spared such a disastrous storm.*

#### SNHS notes:

1. Now the Waterworks at Lake Kilby
2. Now CSX
3. Believed to be near Buckhorn
4. Now at West Washington/Holland Road across from Lipton Tea
5. Lake Meade had not been created yet. The landing was likely on Smith's Creek or the upper part of the Nansemond River.
6. On Turlington Road?
7. Now Speight's Run?



## A Wish Fulfilled 30 Years Later

This was written in 1976. We are fortunate to have that home now and, with the help of our members, are better preparing it for our use.

### **We Need A Home**

This year the Suffolk Nansemond Historical Society is ten years old. We are alive, healthy and growing stronger every year. We need a home! A permanent home. A place we can call our very own. Some place to keep our records, our ever growing accumulation of pictures and other important memorabilia. We need a place where your directors and committees can meet and work on the Society's business. We need a place where interested persons can come, inspect and study or use the historical data and information in our files. None of us may be another H. G. Wells writing a history of the world, but then you never know. What we have is important, at least from a historical point of view. If it is worth anything, it is worth preserving. The heritage of our great City is far too important to be left to the good nature of someone with a spare bedroom, a big closet, or space in the attic. A great man (or was it a woman) once said: "The future is only as great as the consideration of the past."

If you know of some space, a building, or maybe empty offices not being used, please contact one of the officers of your society and tell us about it. We might even find some soap and elbow grease if need be. -- *Boyd E. Quate, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President SNHS 1976*



*Making a flower in the mansard roof at the Dawson House. Note the beautiful window. Picture thanks to Kermit Hobbs*

## Kudos!

We have a bright new office thanks to our volunteer painters: Michael Council, Bill Duggan, Kermit Hobbs, Hunter Odom, and Lynda Stielow; and paint donated by Sherwin-Williams.

# Postscripts

## To our Celebrating History issue Suffolk Bicentennial Commission

Co- Chairmen- Mrs. F. Whitney Godwin, John Henry Powell  
Vice- Chairman- Mrs. Marion J. Watson  
Clerk- Mrs. P. M. Burton  
Treasurer - Major T. Benton

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Lawrence N. Smith	Mrs. Frances E. Williams
Mrs. Joshua Pretlow	Enoch Copeland

**Correction:** Pictured on the insert of the Celebrations issue was the Army's Old Guard Fife and Drum Corps which led the parade in October 1975, not 1976 as previously stated.

### Mailbag

Seeking an obituary for Samuel Eley who died January 29, 1879, in Suffolk.

Please respond to

Kate Eley

kateeley@sc.rr.com

### To our Arts and Entertainment Issue

## CORNZAPOPPIN

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TWO NIGHTS  
WEDNESDAY and THURSDAY  
MARCH 19 and 20, 1947



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CHADWICK THEATRE - - - 8:19 P.M.

Program from the 1947 Lions Club show

### Compliments of BILL'S LUNCHEONETTE

#### Cast

Cousin Linney Pearl.....	Valla Stallings
Typical Old Maid Type	
Elviry Judkins.....	Mae Stone
Domineering Wife Rules the Roost	
Sue Judkins.....	Sarah Anne Fee
Charming Daughter	
Miss Twitty.....	Betty Barlow
Old Maid Looking for a Husband	
Aunt Bessie.....	Lena Butterworth
Old as the Hills	
Mazie Mae .....	Virginia Graves
The Hired Girl from Frog Patch	
Henry Judkins.....	Ikey Elmore
Elviry's Husband—Poor Fellow	
Bob Sandroek.....	Paul Van Valkenburgh
Sue's Heart Throb	
Squire Hicks.....	Jack Pinner
Deaf as a Post	
Elmer Judkins.....	Ben Churn
Red Headed with a voice like a Fog Horn	

Compliments of  
SUFFOLK OIL MILLS

# Pictures from SNHS Summer Events

Volunteer Party—Thanks to our train station volunteers and those who chaired special events in 2006. *Photos thanks to Dr. Miley Walker*



L-R Bill Lynch, Henry Odom, Joe Barlow, Marie Baker, Sid Thomas, and Betty Odom



L-R Karen Hughes, Becky Habel, Sue Davis (straight from another volunteer gig at Obici Hospital) and Jane Sommers



Book and Author Lunch—Held at the Constantia House. Clockwise from below left: Ellen Saunders reviews *To Have and To Hold*; Connie Lapallo, author of *Dark Enough to See the Stars in A Jamestown Sky*; Lynn Bunting, Sandra Bunting and Susan Garrett—the lunch chefs



Tea and Tour of Olde Towne—

Marie Bentley invites guests to tea (top) and Tim Bentley (bottom) tells guests about an Empire chest during the Tea and Tour in Olde Towne Portsmouth. *Photos of Tea and Tour, and Book and Author Lunch, thanks to Julie Johnson*



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### To The Dawson House

In memory of Mary Manos Damiani from Jim and Becky Habel

In memory of Nancy Darden Willard from Jim and Becky Habel

### To The Suffolk-Nansemond Historical Society

In memory of Mary Manos Damiani from Tom and Sue Woodward

## Dawson House Capital Campaign Gifts and Pledges

June - August 2007

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Jeff & Scherry Johnson

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In Honor of Thomas J. O'Connor, III,  
*by Anonymous*  
Henry & Betty Odom  
Sid & Janice Thomas  
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## SNHS Board

Rebecca Habel, President  
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Michael Council, Treasurer  
Robert Tompert, Asst. Treasurer

### Members at Large:

Robert Baker  
Tim Bentley  
Kermit Hobbs  
Karen Hughes  
Hunter Odom

## SNHS Fall Meeting

Monday, October 8 @ 7:00 p.m.

St. Paul's Episcopal Church

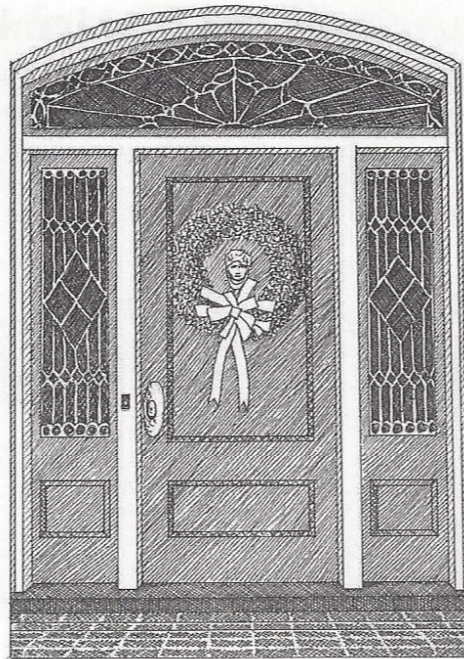
## TRAIN STATION NEWS



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## VOLUNTEERS ALWAYS NEEDED!

Phone 757-923-4750  
Email: trainstation@exis.net



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**A Riverview Ramble**

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*Another milestone on the great summer  
 adventure of the Fearless Four*